

Food Safety Mission Area

Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) Strategic Plan.....



Table of Contents

Introduction4-3

Partnerships and Coordination 4-4

Key External Factors4-4

Mission4-5

Goals4-6

Management Initiatives 4-12

Linkage of Goals to Annual Performance Plan 4-14

Resources Needed4-14

Program Evaluation4-15

Role of External Entities 4-16



Introduction

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) was established by the Secretary of Agriculture on June 17, 1981, pursuant to legislative authority contained in 5 U.S.C. 301 which permits the Secretary to issue regulations governing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Service is responsible for regulating the meat, poultry, and egg products industries to ensure that meat, poultry, and egg products moving in interstate commerce or exported to other countries are safe, wholesome, and accurately labeled.

Legislative mandates provide FSIS with the authority to conduct its public health mission. The Meat Inspection Act of 1890 assured European markets that meat from the United States was safe for export. The Federal Meat Inspection Act of 1906 required Federal employees to inspect all meat and meat products moving in interstate commerce; the Poultry Products Inspection Act of 1957 provided for voluntary Federal inspection of poultry and poultry products; and the Wholesome Meat Act of 1967 and Wholesome Poultry Products Act of 1968 extended inspection and enforcement requirements to products in intrastate commerce.

The Agency also tests product samples for microbial or chemical contaminants to monitor trends or for enforcement purposes. Facilities and equipment are approved by FSIS before inspection is granted, and product labels are approved by the Agency before products can be sold. FSIS administers and carries out programs requiring continuous mandatory inspection of egg processing plants producing liquid, frozen, or dried egg products to ensure that products sold are wholesome, unadulterated, and truthfully labeled. The Agency also oversees the importation of egg products to ensure that U.S. requirements are met.

Because of its food safety responsibilities and its presence in so many plants, FSIS depends upon a large and dedicated workforce to inspect the Nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products. More than 8,100 employees carry out the inspection laws in some 6,500 meat, poultry, and other slaughtering or processing plants, and approximately 126 inplant inspectors inspect egg products. About 80 employees inspect products at point of entry into the United States. Other critical functions are performed by compliance officers, microbiologists, and other employees of the Agency.

Appropriated Agency funds provide the means for funding the Agency's inspection activities. These include primary and second shift slaughter, processing, egg, and import/export inspections as well as laboratory services, pathogen reduction activities, grants to States, other support services, and administrative costs. In addition to appropriated funds, FSIS charges fees for inspection services provided on overtime and, in some cases, holiday basis, and for voluntary services requested by the industry to accommodate business needs. The Agency also charges for accreditation of laboratories.

Despite the successes of the current program, the Agency's senior managers realized a significant gap existed between the original inspection system and the public's expectations for food safety. Foodborne illness outbreaks over the past few years alerted the Agency to the need for establishing fundamental change in the FSIS meat and poultry inspection program to improve food safety, reduce the risk of foodborne illness in the United States, and make better use of the Agency's resources.

The original inspection system largely focused on organoleptic (sensory) inspection, which was appropriate when the first major meat inspection law was passed in 1906. However, many external scientific studies deemed the original program to be inadequate for detecting hazards such as pathogenic microorganisms that can cause foodborne illness.

In February 1995, the Acting Under Secretary for Food Safety and the Executive Team issued the Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) regulatory proposal to serve as the blueprint for the future of meat, poultry, and egg product inspection. FSIS officials knew that a process control system such as

HACCP could greatly improve food safety by identifying and controlling hazards before products reach consumers. The HACCP system, first presented at the 1971 National Conference on Food Protection, provides a more specific and critical approach to the control of microbiological hazards in foods than that provided by traditional inspection and quality control approaches. A HACCP system focuses attention on those points that directly affect safety and employs monitoring to determine whether or not these points are under control.

Through the final rule, FSIS stated its overall food safety goal, which is to reduce the risk of foodborne illness associated with the consumption of meat and poultry products to the greatest extent possible using the HACCP system approach. To underscore the fundamental significance of this shift in its approach to inspection, the Agency created as its singular goal in this strategic plan the effort to enhance the public health by minimizing foodborne illness from meat, poultry, and egg products utilizing the HACCP system.

FSIS did not formally submit its strategic plan to stakeholders for their review. However, through numerous public meetings held over the past several years, most stakeholders have become very familiar with the Agency's approach to achieving food safety through the Pathogen Reduction/HACCP regulation outlined in the plan. Once the plan is finalized, FSIS will make it available to stakeholders by distributing it to employees and posting it on the Internet-FSIS Home Page.

FSIS

Partnerships and Coordination

The Agency has identified a number of cross-cutting program issues. Since the FSIS public health mission is broad in scope, the Agency has traditionally interacted with other agencies on a variety of food safety issues. One example is the President's National Food Safety Initiative. The President directed the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to work with consumers, producers, industry, States, Tribes, universities, and the public to identify ways to further improve the safety of the food supply. The agencies held a series of public meetings to gather information on these topics and issued a report to the President containing recommendations obtained from those meetings.

FSIS has communicated with agencies, both within and external to USDA, about common issues and interests in food safety. FSIS has contacted all USDA agencies with common interests, will share its final strategic plan with those agencies, and will continue to work with them by sharing information on food safety. Departmental issues of common interest were of such a general nature (that is, most agencies simply were interested in FSIS's ongoing food safety activities) that no common coordination of strategic plans was conducted. For agencies external to USDA, FSIS has worked with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the President's National Food Safety Initiative, has exchanged strategic plans with FDA, and has reviewed the CDC strategic plan. CDC data will be used in establishing the Agency's sentinel sites databases. FSIS has also reviewed and commented, as requested, on the strategic plans submitted by HHS, EPA, and the United States Trade Representative. While common areas of interest were again general in nature and did not require inter-agency coordination, some areas for future coordination, such as FDA's responsibility for food safety in retail establishments, will continue to be explored with those agencies.

Key External Factors

A number of key external factors could impact either favorably or unfavorably on the Agency's goal and objectives. These include the following:

- **Budget Constraints/Balanced Budget**—Current trends in reduced budgets and workforce size could impact unfavorably on the Agency's implementation of pro-

gram change and innovation, as well as on the achievement of current inspection goals.

- **Additional Outbreaks/Microbiological Mutations**—Even with a comprehensive inplant inspection system, additional outbreaks of foodborne illness can occur, depending on the handling and preparation of meat, poultry, and egg products by commercial establishments and individual consumers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have identified new and emerging strains of organisms that can cause foodborne illness and have improved their reporting system. Both changes can indicate an apparent increase in illness incidence.
- **Legislative Action**—The mission and programs of FSIS are grounded in legislative mandates. Changes in Federal mandates and Acts could affect what the Agency does and how it does it.
- **Unionized Labor**—As a major stakeholder in FSIS programs, unionized labor (inspectors) could alter the conditions of implementing program change.
- **Consumer Habits**—Non-hygienic practices in the private home are still one of the primary causes of foodborne illness. Additional outbreaks are possible and could affect Agency goals and objectives.
- **Public Opinion**—To the extent that media molds public opinion, Agency goals and objectives could be modified based on media pressure.
- **Special Interest Groups**—Consumer and industry organizations could advocate modification of Agency activities and methods, resulting in different program expectations and goals.
- **New Technologies**—New inplant equipment and processes could impact program objectives through faster processing times and through the need for more product testing and sampling, resulting in a different allocation of resources.
- **New Products**—Newly developed or engineered meat, poultry, and egg products could impact program objectives through the need for more product testing and sampling, resulting in a different allocation of resources.
- **Political Imperatives**—Legislative or administrative priorities could impact Departmental and Agency leadership, which could result in new missions, programs, and goals.
- **Trade Issues**—Internal and external transportation or trade issues could impact Agency goals and objectives through trade barriers or conflicting standards which could result in product delays and affect markets.

Mission

FSIS ensures that the Nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products is safe, wholesome, and correctly labeled and packaged, as required by the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act.

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Goal 1

Enhance the public health by minimizing foodborne illness from meat, poultry, and egg products.

The goal reflects the Agency's public health responsibilities embodied in its Mission Statement and required by its legislative mandates.

The outcome of this goal is a 25% reduction in the number of foodborne illnesses associated with meat, poultry, and egg products by the year 2000. Currently, the base-

Goals.....

line numbers for foodborne illnesses and deaths are estimated to be five million and 4,500, respectively.

Outbreak data (two or more individuals ill from the same source) are compiled by CDC from reports that are voluntarily submitted from state and local health authorities. The laboratory reporting system for Salmonella only captures information on those cases where a patient sees a doctor, the doctor collects a culture and sends the culture to a participating laboratory and the laboratory can perform the specific diagnostic test. The estimates for overall disease incidence are derived from databases plus extrapolations of data collected from population-based studies in specific geographic areas.

Strategy to Achieve the Goal

This goal will be achieved by accomplishing all the daily tasks necessary to satisfy objectives in pathogen reduction, President's National Food Safety Initiative, farm-to-table food safety strategy, Agency cultural change, and international cooperation on food safety. The goal is linked to each objective by the pathogen reduction requirements of the Agency's Pathogen Reduction/HACCP regulation.

The Agency recently reorganized to improve its efficiency and effectiveness in implementing its new food safety regulation. Much of the responsibility for implementation of GPRA in field locations will rest with the new District Managers, who supervise the Agency's field offices. FSIS has allocated substantial autonomy to the District Managers and will be looking to them to oversee the accomplishment of the many tasks outlined in the strategic plan.

As FSIS is only one part of the farm-to-table continuum, quantitatively assessing its contributions to improving public health is very difficult. Many Federal agencies have a role and responsibility in meat, poultry, and egg product life span from production through consumption. The Agency has focused its goal for improving food safety on its inplant inspection authority over meat, poultry, and egg products. Therefore, the Agency's goal can't be measured directly. The plan's performance measures are surrogate measures for those objectives that the Agency can measure. FSIS will achieve its goal only by successfully achieving each of the six objectives.

To ensure food safety from farm-to-table, it is vital that all of FSIS's stakeholders—including other Federal, State, and local governments, producers, the industry, food handlers, and consumers—must participate to avoid duplication and to close any gaps that could compromise food safety.

Required resources to achieve the goal are detailed in the Agency's Annual Performance Plan. New regulations or flexibilities should not be required to achieve the goal.

All of the previously listed Key External Factors could affect achievement of this goal. Key Agency Programs are not listed for each objective since all program areas provide some type of support for each of the planning objectives.

■ Objective 1.1

Reduce pathogens on raw products.

Time Frame for Completion

July 31, 2000

Discussion

Implementation of HACCP and of testing for E. coli and Salmonella should result in a direct reduction of pathogens on raw products and, therefore, a reduction in the cases of foodborne illness associated with meat, poultry, and egg products.

External Factors

Budget constraints/balanced budget; additional outbreaks/microbiological mutations; new technologies; new products; political imperatives

Other Participating Agencies

HHS

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

1. Implement HACCP.
2. Implement E. coli testing.
3. Implement Salmonella testing.
4. Increase laboratory capacity to support Pathogen Reduction Rule targets.

Performance Measures

- 1a. 100% of plants will operate under federally verified HACCP plans.
Baseline: (FY 1996) no plants operate under federally verified HACCP plans.
- 1b. 100% of State plants operate under HACCP.
Baseline: (FY 1996) no State plants operate under HACCP.
- 1c. 100% of plants exporting to U.S. required to operate under equivalent HACCP.
Baseline: (FY 1996) no plants exporting to U.S. required to operate under equivalent HACCP system.
- 2a. 100% of plants are conducting routine E.coli testing to verify HACCP procedures are in place.
Baseline: (FY 1997) 100% of required plants to begin E. coli testing.
- 2b. 100% of plants exporting to U.S. are conducting routine E. coli testing to verify HACCP.
Baseline: (FY 1997) 100% of plants exporting to U.S. begin equivalent E. coli testing.
- 3a. 100% of plants slaughtering cattle, swine, chicken, and turkey are routinely tested for Salmonella incidence.
Baseline: (FY 1997) FSIS begins routine testing for Salmonella incidence in plants slaughtering cattle, swine, chicken, and turkey.
- 3b. Establishment of national baseline standards for *Salmonella*: 1% (steers/heifers), 2.7% (cows/bulls), 7.5% (ground beef), 20% (broilers), 8.7% (hogs), 49.9% (ground turkey), and 44.6% (ground chicken). All plants produce product at or below the standard, and FSIS tests all plants and takes action at those facilities where the standard is not being met.
Baseline: (FY 1996) no standard for *Salmonella* in raw meat and poultry product
- 3c. 100% of countries exporting to U.S. are conducting routine equivalent Salmonella testing.
Baseline: (FY 1997) countries exporting to U.S. begin routine equivalent Salmonella testing.
4. 225,000 tests performed annually.
Baseline: (FY 1996) no tests performed annually.

■ Objective 1.2

Establish effective working partnerships with other public health agencies and stakeholders to support the President's National Food Safety Initiative.

Time Frame for Completion

September 30, 2001

Discussion

The process for establishing partnerships to improve the safety of the nation's food supply with other public health agencies has already begun with the President's National Food Safety Initiative. FSIS is partnering with HHS, ARS, CSREES, and EPA in the areas of foodborne hazard surveillance, coordination, risk assessment, research, inspection, and education.

External Factors

Budget constraints/balanced budget; additional outbreaks/microbiological mutations; public opinion; special interest groups; political imperatives

Other Participating Agencies

FDA, CDC, ARS, CSREES, EPA

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

1. Expand Foodborne Disease Active Surveillance Network (FoodNet) capability.
2. Improve Federal-State-local coordination of and response to foodborne illness through the leadership of the intergovernmental group Foodborne Outbreak Response Coordinating Group (FORCG).
3. Identify and quantify food safety risks.
4. Provide scientific leadership in identifying and addressing food safety hazards by developing and promoting the Agency's data collection and research agenda.
5. Establish partnerships with other Federal-State food safety agencies to improve inspections and compliance.

Performance Measures

1. Determine the extent to which foodborne illness is attributable to meat, poultry, and egg products.
Baseline: (FY 1995) surveillance program conducted to determine the incidence of foodborne illness nationally.
2. Establish standard operating procedures for coordination of foodborne illness outbreaks and other food safety emergencies.
Baseline: (FY 1995) no standard operating procedures for coordination of foodborne illness outbreaks and other food safety emergencies.
3. Improve the quality and scope of risk assessments and begin one new risk assessment.
Baseline: (FY 1997) one formal risk assessment in progress.
4. Initiate projects in high priority research areas.
Baseline: (FY 1996) identify 35 high priority research needs.
5. Conduct reviews of very small plants operating under State inspection.
Baseline: To be determined

■ Objective 1.3

Promote food safety from farm-to-table.

Time Frame for Completion

September 30, 2002

Discussion

FSIS is only one part of the farm-to-table continuum. In areas where FSIS does not have direct authority, the Agency will collaborate with Federal, State and local agencies and with other stakeholders to encourage food safety practices and to offer assistance where appropriate.

External Factors

Budget constraints/balanced budget; additional outbreaks/microbiological mutations; legislative action; consumer habits; public opinion; special interest groups; new technologies; new products; political imperatives; trade issues

Other Participating Agencies

APHIS, ARS

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

1. Collaborate with stakeholders to address food safety risks in animal production.
2. Improve food safety during transportation and distribution.
3. Expand communications on food safety information to the general public through partnerships.
4. Encourage the adoption of the Food Code by State and local governments.
5. Provide training and technical assistance to improve compliance with States' retail and food service food safety programs.
6. Increase industry compliance with food safety standards.

Performance Measures

1. Increase collaborative initiatives undertaken by 75% to 14.
Baseline: (FY 1997) eight collaborative initiatives in Animal Production undertaken.
2. Implement a comprehensive strategy to improve food safety during transportation and distribution.
Baseline: (FY 1996) published Advance Notice of Public Rulemaking for transportation and distribution.
3. Increase the number of people reached by 50% to 165 million.
Baseline: (FY 1997) 110 million people reached with food safety information.
4. Meat, poultry and egg products portions of the Food Code adopted by 30 States.
Baseline: (FY 1996) Food Code adopted by one State.
- 5a. Develop information and implement strategies to improve commercial food safety practices.
Baseline: (FY 1997) identify unsafe retail food safety practices.
- 5b. Provide technical assistance to harmonize meat, poultry, and egg products standards and enforcement at retail.
Baseline: (FY 1997) training teleconference series initiated on food service safety programs.
6. Consistent high compliance achieved from slaughter through retail.
Baseline: (FY 1996) compliance activities focused on slaughter and processing plants.

■ Objective 1.4

Complete the necessary cultural change to support HACCP and food safety.

Time Frame for Completion

September 30, 2002

Discussion

FSIS recognizes that the major cultural change embodied in the Pathogen Reduction/HACCP regulation requires a commitment to train employees and to establish an environment that promotes such change. FSIS will develop specific programs to train inspectors and other employees to carry out the re-defined regulatory tasks and procedures. Industry must review its operations as well.

External Factors

Budget constraints/balanced budget; unionized labor; new technologies; new products

Other Participating Agencies

OGC

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

1. Train the workforce to carry out the re-defined regulatory tasks and procedures generated by the Pathogen Reduction and HACCP rule.
2. Clarify and emphasize industry's responsibility for food safety through regulatory reform.
3. Train inspectors to carry out new slaughter inspection methods as they are developed and implemented.
4. Promote new technologies to enhance food safety.
5. Establish a Management Development Academy.
6. Centralize the management of all policy, rulemaking, and program development activities to reform existing regulations and eliminate layering.

Performance Measures

1. 100% of employees trained in HACCP and new inspection techniques required by a HACCP system.
Baseline: (FY 1996) no employees trained in new HACCP rules and new inspection techniques required by a HACCP system.
- 2a. 100% of plants operate under federally verified HACCP plans.
Baseline: (FY 1996) no plants operate under federally verified HACCP plans.
- 2b. 100% of State plants operate under HACCP.
Baseline: (FY 1996) no State plants operate under HACCP.
3. Inspectors trained as new slaughter methods are developed.
Baseline: (FY 1997) no inspectors trained in new slaughter inspection methods.
4. (1) Actively solicit proposals for new food safety technologies.
(2) encourage companies to develop and demonstrate new technologies.
(3) establish flexible procedures which encourage pilot testing new technologies.
(4) develop streamlined review procedures for new technologies.
Baseline: (FY 1995) proposed new technologies reviewed under existing facilities and equipment policies.

5. A total of 500 managers trained at Management Academy.
Baseline: (FY 1997) decision to establish a Management Academy.
- 6a. 80% of regulatory standards performance-based.
Baseline: (FY 1996) no regulatory performance-based standards.
- 6b. Increase number of pages of regulations eliminated or re-invented to 430.
Baseline: (FY 1997) 50 pages of regulations eliminated or re-invented.

■ Objective 1.5

Promote international cooperation on food safety.

Time Frame for Completion

September 30, 2002

Discussion

The Agency will promote international cooperation and acceptance of HACCP equivalent systems to assure the safety of the domestic food supply through the application of appropriate domestic food safety standards to imported products. FSIS will work through Codex Alimentarius to help develop international food safety standards.

External Factors

Budget constraints/balanced budget; legislative action; public opinion; special interest groups; new technologies; new products; political imperatives; trade issues

Other Participating Agencies

Codex Alimentarius, United States Codex group

Strategies for Achieving the Objective

1. Assure the safety of the domestic food supply through the application of appropriate domestic food safety standards to imported products.
2. Participate in Codex Alimentarius to improve the Codex system and to develop and adopt international food safety standards that promote fair trade.

Performance Measures

1. All imported products produced under programs with equivalent HACCP food safety requirements.
Baseline: (FY 1994) World Trade Organization “equivalency” basis for trade established.
2. (1) 1999 Codex Alimentarius Commission meeting meets U.S. objectives.
(2) new framework for adoption of international standards established.
(3) actively promote the adoption of Codex standards.
Baseline: (FY 1997) Codex Alimentarius Commission Meetings outcomes.

■ Linkage of the FSIS Goal to the USDA Secretary's Goals

Through its goal, FSIS contributes significantly to the three Departmental goals.

USDA Secretary's Goals	Linkage of FSIS Goal
1. Expand economic and trade opportunities for agricultural producers and other rural residents.	Through its goal, FSIS assures the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products, thereby contributing substantially to opening, expanding, and maintaining domestic and global market opportunities for agricultural producers.
2. Ensure food for the hungry, and a safe, affordable, nutritious, and accessible food supply.	FSIS administers food safety program responsibilities through the Pathogen Reduction/HACCP regulation in its goal as part of its responsibility for ensuring that commercial supplies of meat, poultry, and egg products are safe and properly labeled and packaged.
3. Promote sensible management of our natural resources.	FSIS collaborates with other USDA agencies such as APHIS through the objectives to support producer activities to raise animals in ways that promote sustainable management of land and protect water quality.

Management Initiatives

Initiatives in administrative infrastructure contribute significantly to supporting the Agency's mission and programmatic goals because their performance measures provide important measurements of the Agency's reorganization efforts, administrative process efficiency, and computer access for field personnel. Attention to these elements will result in an Agency administrative structure that will be in conformity with Departmental guidelines and initiatives.

FSIS is committed to providing equal employment opportunity to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation, in addition to facilitating full implementation of all laws, legislation, and regulations regarding Equal Employment Opportunity. The Agency strives to prevent discrimination in employment practices.

Its goals are to reach out to groups which have historically been neglected in its workforce and monitor and evaluate progress toward workforce diversity. The success of the FSIS programs depends upon eliminating the barriers that prevent fair and equal treatment for employees.

FSIS strongly supports the Secretary of Agriculture's goal of improving workforce diversity and civil rights within USDA.

■ Management Initiative 1

Establish management strategies to maximize effectiveness, efficiency, and diversity of FSIS resources to improve food safety.

Time Frame for Completion

January 1, 2002

Discussion

To redeploy as many resources as possible to the front line, FSIS will maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of its administrative processes. The Agency therefore plans to streamline administrative systems and procedures and eliminate barriers to cultural diversity in Agency hiring, promotion, training, and recognition practices.

External Factors

Budget constraints/balanced budget; legislative action; new technologies; political imperatives

Other Participating Agencies

None

Strategies for Achieving the Management Initiative

1. Consolidate and streamline headquarters and field management.
2. Streamline support structures to increase the proportion of the Agency's resources deployed to the frontline workforce.
3. Streamline and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative and human resource support functions.
4. Optimize performance of the Agency's mission by ensuring access to the best employees available through the hiring, promotion, training, and recognition of a diverse workforce.

Performance Measures

1. (1) Reduce the number of headquarters units reporting to the Administrator by more than 40%.
(2) reduce the number of field management offices by more than 50%.
Baseline: (FY 1995) organizational structure and configuration.
2. Reduce non-inplant staff by 20%.
Baseline: (FY 1995) staffing levels.
3. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative and human resource support functions by 20%.
Baseline: (FY 1995) levels of efficiency and effectiveness of administrative and human resource support functions.
- 4a. Improve significantly the representation at the GS-13 level and above.
Baseline: (FY 1995) level of the workforce at the GS 13 level and above who are women, minorities, or persons with disabilities.
- 4b. Improve significantly the representation at all levels.
Baseline: (FY 1995) level of the workforce at the GS-12 level and below who are women, minorities, or persons with disabilities.

Linkage of Goals to Annual Performance Plan

The FSIS strategic plan contains one goal and six objectives with associated performance measurements. The same objectives and measurements detailed in the strategic plan will be used in the Annual Performance Plan (APP). The six objectives, written as performance goals in the APP, have been slightly modified to help Agency managers focus on the need to collect and track data for the fiscal years listed in the APP. The annual goals are written in measurable, performance-oriented terms so that annual program evaluations can more easily gauge progress for each performance goal. Maintaining a common set of objectives and performance goals provides a strong linkage between the long-range strategic plan objectives and the more output-oriented performance goals in the Annual Performance Plan.

Details of the linkage of the FSIS goal to the five Agency Program Activities (Federal Food Inspection, Import/Export Inspection, Laboratory Services, Field Automation and Information Management (FAIM), and Grants-to-States) are contained in the Annual Performance Plan.

The Agency's approach to creating its initial APP began with senior managers establishing initial objectives for the goal. Managers will then identify supporting activities, tasks, and their outcomes, which show what must be done to execute the objectives. Next, they will negotiate timeframes and resource requirements and establish performance measures for outcomes in collaboration with line managers and in conjunction with internal budgetary processes and procedures. Finally, they will prepare an evaluation plan displaying this information, and this plan will be tied to manager performance evaluations.

FSIS has established a performance measure to track the number of automation processes improved to determine how well information technology is supporting strategic and program goals. It is not considering whether any revisions will be needed to budget account and program activity structures.

Resources Needed

Several objectives in the strategic plan will be accomplished by reallocating resources, while others will require additional funding.

The Agency budget maintains inspection and continues making investments in technology, training, and science. It is expected that the implementation of the Pathogen Reduction/HACCP rule will generate the efficiencies necessary to maintain the level of inspection required to ensure the safety of the growing supply of meat, poultry, and egg products with the current level of inspection staffing. The FSIS budget maintains a frontline workforce capable of providing rigorous science-based inspection. Furthermore, the budget reflects a decision by the Administrative and the Congress to reallocate inspection resources from traditional in-plant settings to high-risk food safety areas beyond the confines of the plant. Provision is made in the budget for States administering their own inspection programs to be reimbursed by the Federal government for up to 50 percent of the cost of administering their programs.

Proposed legislation for user fees is included in the FSIS budget to recover an increased share of the cost of inspection from the industry that directly benefits from inspection services. The economic impact of such a proposal is about one-half cent per pound of inspected product.

Program Evaluation

The Agency did not conduct a formal program evaluation in creating its strategic plan. FSIS did, however, involve all stakeholders and constituencies in two distinct phases to gain valuable information about the Pathogen Reduction/HACCP regulation, a core component of the Agency's goal.

In 1993, FSIS sought to evaluate its current situation. Initially, FSIS held six meetings and hearings throughout the country, to gather comments from all constituencies on a draft strategic plan and to determine both the agency's current performance and constituent expectations for its future. FSIS sent more than 1,000 invitations to consumer groups, professional associations, academia, major industry segments, State and local governments, and other government and public health professionals.

From 1995 through 1996, FSIS began to reshape itself in a fundamental way. The vehicle for change was the *Pathogen Reduction; Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems Final Rule*, published in July 1996. This regulation changes the way FSIS conducts its regulatory responsibilities. It puts the responsibility for safe meat and poultry products on the industry, with FSIS setting performance standards for pathogen control.

The regulation was developed through partnerships between FSIS and its constituents. During development, finalization, and initial implementation of the regulation, FSIS held:

- 14 Information Briefings
- 8 Scientific and Technical Conferences
- 5 Public Hearings
- 22 Stakeholder Conferences

In addition to normal communication channels, such as notices in the *Federal Register*, letters were sent to thousands of organizations representing consumers, the industry, the public health community, academia, and other Federal, State, and local agencies. The commenters raised new issues, questioned traditional wisdom, and related personal experiences. These constituent groups provided feedback which was used to craft the final version of the regulation and formed the basis for the Agency's first objective in the strategic plan.

Program Evaluation Schedule

1997 through 2002

FSIS will continue to work with its constituencies to evaluate how well they are being served by its programs. From 1998 through 2002, the Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation will issue advisory evaluations each quarter and will provide a formal, thorough evaluation of the objectives and targets contained in the strategic plan in February to the Administrator. Senior Agency executives will use evaluation results for improving performance when they create the next strategic plan and review the Annual Performance Plan. Managers will also utilize trend and baseline data developed from sentinel sites to review the continued appropriateness of its goal and objectives.

The main purpose of the strategic plan is to achieve a reduction in illnesses associated with eating meat, poultry, and egg products. The Office of Public Health and Science will track and analyze that information annually as the ultimate evaluation of how well FSIS is meeting its stated goal and targets.

FSIS also plans to include customer service activities as part of its program evaluation for GPRA. In 1994, as a response to Executive Order 12862, the Agency established customer service standards which reflected the Agency's inspection activity.

These standards represented broad Agency goals which communicate to customers the different types of services that they can expect from the Agency. The standards will be reviewed annually from 1998 through 2002 and should be consistent with the new inspection approach the Agency outlined in its Pathogen Reduction/HACCP regulation.

Role of External Entities

The preparation of the FSIS strategic plan was performed by a cross-functional team of Federal Agency employees. All headquarters and field communications, strategy sessions, planning meetings, etc., were conducted by in-house personnel.